



## **Civil Society Dialogue Network Geographic Meeting**

### **An EU Strategy for engagement with Iraq: Gathering civil society input**

**13-14 September 2017**

**Martin's Brussels EU Hotel**

**Boulevard Charlemagne / Karel de Grotelaan 80, 1000 Brussels, Belgium**

## **CONCEPT NOTE**

### **Background**

On 19 June 2017, the EU's Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) adopted conclusions on Iraq in which it stated:<sup>1</sup>

'Following on from its Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq, as well as the Da'esh threat, the EU remains firmly committed to supporting Iraq in its recovery from the current crisis, notably through the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Iraq once fully ratified, including cooperation on democracy and human rights, trade and investment and migration in all its aspects.

On the basis of these Conclusions, the Council invites the High Representative and the European Commission to present in due course elements for an EU strategy for engagement with Iraq.'

In this context, the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) have asked the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) to organise a dialogue meeting between Iraqi civil society actors and EU officials working on the preparation of the new strategy.

This meeting will be a follow-up to the successful Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) Geographic Meeting entitled 'Armed violence and capacities for peace in Iraq: actors, causes, impact and EU responses' which took place in December 2014 in Brussels.<sup>2</sup>

### **Objective**

The overall objective of this meeting is to gather Iraqi civil society analysis and recommendations on the development of an EU Strategy for Iraq.

It is envisaged that the outputs of the meeting will be:

- Analysis of the current conflict in Iraq, including its root causes and its impact on various sectors
- Examination of the current peace dynamics in Iraq and looking ahead to the coming 12 to 36 months

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/06/19-conclusions-iraq/>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://eplo.org/activities/ongoing-projects/civil-society-dialogue-network/geographic-meetings/>

- Assessment of the EU's past engagement and potential future role in promoting peace and development in Iraq
- Recommendations for priorities and approaches for future EU engagement to promote stabilisation and sustainable national peacebuilding and development in Iraq
- Recommendations for including enhanced EU engagement with Iraqi civil society in the new EU Strategy for Iraq

## **Participants**

The meeting will bring together 30-40 participants, including Iraqi civil society actors, and officials from the EC and the EEAS.

Representatives of EU Member States will be invited to participate in Session 6 on Day 2 of the meeting and other relevant parties, including Iraqi academics and other experts, may also be invited to participate.

EPLO will endeavour to ensure that women and youth representatives are included in the Iraqi civil society participants.

## **Format**

A two-day meeting consisting of six sessions. In most sessions, initial presentations from one or two speakers will be followed by a facilitated discussion in which all participants will be encouraged to provide analysis and recommendations.

## **Language**

Simultaneous interpretation Arabic–English/English–Arabic will be provided

## **Background Paper**

EPLO will commission the preparation of a [CSDN Background Paper](#) on the current state of peacebuilding civil society actors in Iraq as an input into this meeting.

### **Civil Society Dialogue Network**

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a mechanism for dialogue between civil society and EU policy-makers on issues related to peace and conflict. It is co-financed by the European Union (Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace). It is managed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), a civil society network, in co-operation with the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The third phase of the CSDN will last from 2017 to 2020. For more information, please visit the [EPLO website](#).

# AGENDA

Day 1 – Wednesday 13 September 2017

08.30 – 09.00	<b>Registration of participants</b>
09.00 – 09.15	<b>Welcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sonya Reines-Djivanides – Executive Director, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)</li><li>• Colin Scicluna – Director, Directorate for the Middle East and North Africa, European External Action Service (EEAS)</li></ul>
09.15 – 11.00	<b>Session 1: Analysis of current conflict and peace dynamics in Iraq</b> <p>The aim of this session will be for participants to provide their general assessment of the current political and security situation, and trends in Iraq.</p> <p>The discussions in this session could be guided by the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the current conflict and peace dynamics in Iraq?</li><li>• What are the prospects for the coming 12 to 36 months?</li><li>• What elements should the EU take into account in its efforts to support stability and development in Iraq?</li><li>• In the eyes of Iraqis, where does the EU have specific added value?</li></ul> <p>Facilitator: Sonya Reines-Djivanides – EPLO</p> <p>Introductory comments by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Representatives</li></ul>
11.00 – 11.30	<b>Coffee Break</b>
11.30 – 13.00	<b>Session 2: Security and justice sector reform (SJSR), and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR)</b> <p>The aim of this session will be for participants to provide their analysis of and recommendations on SJSR and DDR in Iraq.</p> <p>The discussions in this session could be guided by the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>SJSR:</b> What are people's main expectations vis-à-vis the security sector and the justice system in Iraq, and how could improvements be made in practice?</li><li>• <b>DDR:</b> Which measures should be in place to ensure:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ the removal of weapons from the hands of combatants?</li><li>○ the extrication of combatants from military structures?</li><li>○ the reintegration of former combatants into society?</li></ul></li></ul>

	<p>Facilitator: Ben Moore – Assistant Director, EPLO</p> <p>Introductory comments by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EEAS</li> <li>• CSO Representative</li> </ul>
13.00 – 14.15	<b>Lunch</b>
14.15 – 15.45	<p><b>Session 3: Stabilisation and reconstruction</b></p> <p>The aim of this session will be for participants to provide their analysis of and recommendations on the stabilisation and reconstruction of Iraq.</p> <p>The discussions in this session could be guided by the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which stabilisation needs and geographical areas need to be prioritised?</li> <li>• Is there a role for regional actors in the reconstruction of Iraq? If so, what should it be?</li> </ul> <p>Facilitator: Ben Moore – EPLO</p> <p>Introductory comments by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EC and/or EEAS</li> <li>• CSO Representative</li> </ul>
15.45 – 16.00	<p><b>Closing Remarks (Day 1)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raffaella Iodice – Head of Unit, Unit for the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), European Commission (EC)</li> <li>• Ben Moore – EPLO</li> </ul>

## Day 2 – Thursday 14 September

08.30 – 09.00	<p><b>Registration of participants</b></p>
09.00 – 10.30	<p><b>Session 4: Governance and reconciliation</b></p> <p>The aim of this session will be for participants to provide their analysis of and recommendations on issues relating to governance and reconciliation in Iraq.</p> <p>The discussions in this session could be guided by the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reconciliation:</b> What is the best method of fostering reconciliation in Iraq today, especially at the grassroots level? How can national identity be strengthened?</li> <li>• <b>Electoral system:</b> What needs to happen for the electoral system to generate more cross-sectarian alliances and policy-based politics cutting across different groups and regions in Iraq?</li> <li>• <b>Governance:</b> How does national- and subnational-level governance need to be reformed in order to support more stable politics and equitable and predictable services for the population?</li> <li>• <b>Role of civil society:</b> How can civil society act as a “watchdog” regarding budgetary procedures (e.g. budget allocation, revenue sharing), and implementation (e.g. exposing corruption cases and corrupt officials and institutions, including the judiciary)?</li> </ul> <p>Facilitator: Sonya Reines-Djivanides – EPLO</p> <p>Introductory comments by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EC and/or EEAS</li> <li>• CSO Representative</li> </ul>
10.30 – 11.00	<p><b>Coffee Break</b></p>
11.00 – 12.00	<p><b>Session 5: Education</b></p> <p>The aim of this session will be for participants to provide their analysis of and recommendations on the possible contribution of education to reconciliation in Iraq.</p> <p>The discussions in this session could be guided by the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the key challenges in the education sector in Iraq?</li> <li>• Which initiatives should the EU promote to strengthen access to high-quality education?</li> <li>• To what extent can education contribute to deradicalisation?</li> </ul> <p>Facilitator: Ben Moore / Sonya Reines-Djivanides – EPLO</p> <p>Introductory comments by:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EC and/or EEAS</li> <li>• CSO Representative</li> </ul>
12.00 – 13.15	<b>Lunch</b>
13.15 – 14.45	<p><b>Session 6: Wrap-up and Recommendations</b></p> <p>The aim of this session will be for participants to discuss the various recommendations made during the meeting in the presence of representatives of EU Member States.</p> <p>Facilitator: Ben Moore – EPLO</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSO Representatives</li> </ul>
14.45 – 15.00	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rosamaria Gili – Head of Division, Division for the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Regional Policies, EEAS</li> <li>• Ben Moore – EPLO</li> </ul>

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